

SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS A- OUTBREAK

- We know this is an anxious time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill. We are working closely with local health officials to deal with the situation and will keep parents updated with any important information.
- At this time, under the guidance of the county health department, we believe students can safely attend classes and schools will remain open. Our thoughts are with all of our families and children who are affected.
- If pandemic flu continues to spread and more students become ill, health officials may need to close schools for an extended period of time (for example, up to 6 weeks).
- The purpose of closing schools will be to decrease contact among children in order to decrease their risk of getting sick and to limit the spread of infection. If schools are closed, children should stay at home.
- We urge parents to plan now for the possibility of schools closing. Arrange day care, and home schooling.
- Parents can help protect their children and prevent the spread of pandemic flu as they would colds and other flu by taking the following precautions:
 - Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
 - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
 - Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick and stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Recommendations may change during the course of a flu pandemic. We will make public announcements through the media and parents can the school district's hotline at (INSERT HOTLINE).
- For more information on pandemic flu and prevention, visit the Springfield/Greene County Health Department website at www.springfieldmogov.org/health or call (417) 864-1083.